

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I wish this resolution were not necessary, but maybe we should welcome this and embrace it as a teachable moment, not only to understand the religious tenets, practices, and traditions of various people in this country, but also to understand what it means to say we are a Nation dedicated to the proposition that all are equal.

No one said that the freedoms we cherish need be convenient. They do require from each of us, from time to time, accommodation, even inconvenience. This is a teachable moment, an important lesson in tolerance, equality and, yes, accommodation.

I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN) for bringing this forward, and I urge my colleagues to support this.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 25.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE DURING A WAR OR OTHER MILITARY OPERATION

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3625) to make permanent the waiver authority of the Secretary of Education with respect to student financial assistance during a war or other military operation or national emergency.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3625

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003 addresses the unique situations that active duty military personnel and other affected individuals may face in connection with their enrollment in postsecondary institutions and their Federal student loans; and

(2) the provisions authorized by such Act should be made permanent, thereby allowing the Secretary of Education to continue providing assistance to active duty service members and other affected individuals and their families.

SEC. 2. PERMANENT EXTENSION OF WAIVER AUTHORITY.

The Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-76; 20 U.S.C. 1070, note) is amended by striking section 6.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to H.R. 3625 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SESTAK asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3625, an act to permanently extend waiver authority to the Secretary of Education with respect to enrollment in post-secondary institutions and student financial assistance during a period of combat or national emergency.

This legislation recognizes the unique and unexpected situations that military personnel face when called to active duty to serve our country, as well as situations that many face in times of a national emergency, even here at home.

The intent of this legislation is simple: to provide the Secretary of Education with the permanent authority to ensure that active duty military personnel are not financially harmed by the service that they perform.

The Secretary is thereby granted the authority to take necessary actions which include, first, protecting borrowers from further financial difficulty when they are called to serve. This will ensure that when a student withdraws from college because of his or her status as an individual called up for service, Guard, Reserve or active, or, if they are affected by a disaster, that the requirement that grant overpayments be repaid would be waived, and collection activities on a defaulted education loan may be halted for the time period during which a borrower is serving.

Second, minimizing administrative requirements without impacting the integrity of the Federal Student Aid program. So, for instance, certain requests that previously required written documentation may now be made orally by an affected individual or member of the borrower's family when that member may actually be, while applying for school, actually in conflict overseas.

Third, adjusting the calculation used to determine students' eligibility for aid for those whose financial circumstances change because the student or his or her parents are called to serve, such as when a parent was about to give a large contribution to the son's education, is suddenly called up in the National Guard, and is unable to make that commitment.

This bill, therefore, encourages financial aid administrators to choose to use professional judgment as the proper method of determining financial need that is most beneficial to an affected individual and to his or her family; for

instance, taking into account the most favorable tax period for the student's or the parents' recording period in order to be assessed on that year's tax recording period, a grant or aid.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague Mr. KLINE for his leadership on this legislation in past Congresses and for the flexibility that our men and women in the service have received because of you. These provisions have been critical to our men and women serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. In addition, these provisions will provide critical relief to those who answer the call to serve in the future, including responding to national emergencies and natural disasters.

I am also pleased with the additional relief provided to men and women in uniform in the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, which is currently waiting for the President's signature. That piece of legislation included necessary provisions that recognize military service by allowing those called to service to serve on active duty, including National Guard and Reservists, to defer payments on their student loans not only while serving but for a period of time after leaving active duty.

Because of unforeseen national emergencies, such as Hurricane Katrina, as well as our continued military engagement overseas, it is important that we pass the legislation before us and allow the Secretary of Education to continue providing this needed relief. Without prompt passage of H.R. 3625, the Secretary's authority to provide this flexibility will expire at the end of this week. It is critical not only for those currently receiving relief from unnecessary financial burden while sacrificing for our country, but also for those who will serve our country in the future, that these provisions be made permanent.

I urge my colleagues to pass the resolution.

□ 1330

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of permanently extending the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003, or HEROES. This extension will ensure that all of our men and women serving in the military will always receive the flexibility they need in dealing with their student loans and post-secondary education commitments.

Mr. Speaker, I have championed this act since coming to Congress, and support for this legislation has always transcended party lines. I appreciate that Members on both sides of the aisle have joined together once again this year. I would like to thank senior Republican Member McKEON and Chairmen MILLER and HINOJOSA for their continued support for higher education and this legislation. And I extend my

personal thanks to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) with his many years of distinguished naval service for joining me in this effort to protect the higher education interest of members of the Armed Forces.

The HEROES Act will ensure support for military personnel by continuing to allow the U.S. Secretary of Education to provide the appropriate assistance and flexibility to men and women in uniform as they transfer in and out of post-secondary education during time of war. I must say, this has worked very well and successfully, giving the Secretary the flexibility, but we in Congress need to provide that flexibility.

Throughout our involvement in this war on terrorism, many thousands of men and women who serve our Nation in the Reserves or National Guard have been called to active duty. Many of these men and women are also college and university students who are called away from their families, class work and studies to defend the Nation. Unfortunately, due to a number of restrictions in the Higher Education Act, these individuals are at risk of losing financial assistance and educational credit as a result of their service. Such a scenario is clearly not acceptable.

The HEROES Act provides assurance to our men and women in uniform that they will not face education-related financial or administrative difficulties while they defend our Nation.

This bill is specific in its intent to insure that, as a result of a war or military contingency operation or national emergency, our men and women in uniform are protected. By granting flexibility to the Secretary of Education, the HEROES Act will protect recipients of student financial assistance from further financial difficulty generated when they are called to serve, minimize administrative requirements without affecting the integrity of the programs, adjust the calculation used to determine financial need to accurately reflect the financial condition of the individual and his or her family, and provide the Secretary with the authority to address issues not yet foreseen.

I think all of us recognize the absurdity of a young man or woman being deployed to a foreign shore, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, while they are a student and getting in financial difficulties because of that service.

I am pleased to offer this legislation which provides a permanent extension of the HEROES Act. By permanently extending this act, we not only send a strong message of support to our troops, but we also provide them with the peace of mind that this program will continue throughout the duration of their current or any subsequent deployment.

The legislation before us today is an indication of Congress's commitment to our military, our students, our families and our schools. I urge my colleagues to stand in strong support of

the HEROES Act and join me in voting "yes" on H.R. 3625.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the ranking Republican member on the House Education and Labor Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON).

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I rise in strong support of this bill to support our brave student soldiers.

The men and women of the Armed Forces give selflessly to defend our freedom overseas and respond to emergencies here at home. Some of them are also students pursuing the dream of a college education, just like millions of other Americans. These military personnel volunteer to put their educational pursuits on hold so they can serve the Nation. We owe them a debt of gratitude, and the least we can do is make their transition to and from education as seamless as possible.

I would like to recognize the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) for his long-standing commitment to the legislation before us. He had an outstanding career with the U.S. Marine Corps before coming to Congress, and I want to thank him also for his service there. He has championed passage of this bill on a temporary basis since 2003, and he is here today supporting a permanent extension of this measure to ensure members of the military will always be afforded the flexibility and support they need.

This bill has always received support from our friends on the other side of the aisle, and I am pleased to have key members of the Education and Labor Committee joining us in introducing legislation to extend the flexibility and waiver authority in this bill. I want to thank Chairmen MILLER and HINOJOSA, along with Mr. SESTAK, who also had a very distinguished career in the Navy, and it is good to see Navy and Marines still working together, for introducing legislation that as we propose makes this legislation permanent.

The men and women of our Armed Forces have made considerable sacrifices for our Nation, and for that we are grateful. As members of the Education Committee, we also recognize the importance of a higher education system that is accessible. What this bill does is allow the Secretary of Education to accommodate the unique needs of our student soldiers so that higher education remains flexible and accessible while they serve our country.

Once again, I would like to thank Representative KLINE for his leadership and recognize our friends on the other side of the aisle for their continued support of this legislation. I strongly support the permanent extension of the HEROES Act to support the many he-

roes protecting our freedom, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting "yes."

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK), for stepping into the breach here and providing the leadership he has provided on this important legislation, and urge all of my colleagues to get behind this legislation and let's vote "yes" and permanently extend this flexibility.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

As the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON) has said, I am privileged to stand up here as a former Navy officer with someone who has served so well in the U.S. Marine Corps. Someone has said that the Navy without the Marine Corps is like a coat without buttons. So it is a great bipartisan effort here on what I think is an instrumental bill.

As Mr. KLINE knows, and why he has worked on this so assiduously over the years, when you lead men and women in combat, what you most want them to have is their head in the game. You don't want them looking back at some problems at home, at debt at home that is hurting their families, nor do you want them looking ahead into some type of future that they want to have. Their safety and the safety of their brethren, the men and women standing on either side of them, depends upon them having their head in the game. That is why this bill is so very important.

It is extremely important now in Iraq and Afghanistan. I compare the men and women out there and having their head in the game compared to those great patriots of the world's greatest generation, World War II. Back in World War II, the average soldier was in combat 182 days. There were horrific battles from Guadalcanal to Iwo Jima to the Battle of the Bulge, but there was dwell time in between those great battles. Our soldiers, our marines over there in Iraq and Afghanistan go outside the wire every day for 15 months. There is unrelenting strain upon them. In order to have a measure of relieving that, I am proud to stand beside you, sir, on this bill.

I urge my colleagues to do what is important, recognize the bipartisan approach of this and recognize that this is the way to take care of our troops.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUMENAUER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3625.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 590) supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month and expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should raise awareness of domestic violence in the United States and its devastating effects on families and communities, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 590

Whereas one in four women will experience domestic violence sometime in her life;

Whereas domestic violence affects men, women, and children of all ages, racial, ethnic, economic, and religious backgrounds;

Whereas women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest rates, per capita, of intimate partner violence;

Whereas 13 percent of teenage girls who have been in a relationship report being hit or hurt by their partners and one in four teenage girls has been in a relationship in which she was pressured into performing sexual acts by her partner;

Whereas there is a need for middle schools, secondary schools, and post-secondary schools to educate students about the issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking;

Whereas the annual cost of lost productivity due to domestic violence is estimated as \$727,800,000 with over \$7,900,000 paid work-days lost per year;

Whereas homicides were the second leading cause of death on the job for women, with 15 percent of the 119 workplace homicides of women in 2003 attributed to a current or former husband or boyfriend;

Whereas landlords frequently deny housing to victims of domestic violence who have protection orders or evict victims of domestic violence for seeking help, such as by calling 911, after a domestic violence incident or who have other indications that they are domestic violence victims;

Whereas 92 percent of homeless women experience severe physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lifetimes;

Whereas Americans suffer 2,200,000 medically treated injuries due to interpersonal violence annually, at a cost of \$37,000,000,000 (\$33,000,000,000 in productivity losses, \$4,000,000,000 in medical treatment);

Whereas people aged 15 to 44 years comprise 44 percent of the population, but account for nearly 75 percent of injuries and 83 percent of costs due to interpersonal violence;

Whereas 40 to 60 percent of men who abuse women also abuse children;

Whereas male children exposed to domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own partners;

Whereas children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, and engage in teenage prostitution;

Whereas adolescent girls who reported dating violence were 60 percent more likely to

report one or more suicide attempts in the past year;

Whereas 13.7 percent of the victims of murder-suicide cases were the children of the perpetrator and 74.6 percent were female while 91.9 percent of the perpetrators were male; in 30 percent of those cases the male perpetrator also committed suicide;

Whereas a 2001 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on homicide among intimate partners found that female intimate partners are more likely to be murdered with a firearm than all other means combined;

Whereas according to one study, during court ordered visitation, five percent of abusive fathers threaten to kill their spouses, 34 percent of abusive fathers threaten to kidnap their children, and 25 percent of abusive fathers threaten to physically hurt their children;

Whereas homicide is the third leading cause of death for Native American women and 75 percent of Native American women who are killed are killed by a family member or an acquaintance;

Whereas 88 percent of men think that our society should do more to respect women and girls;

Whereas men say that the entertainment industry, government leaders and elected officials, the sports industry, schools, colleges and universities, the news media and employers should be doing more to prevent intimate partner violence;

Whereas there is a need to increase funding for programs carried out under the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (VAWA 2005), Public Law 109-162, aimed at intervening and preventing domestic violence in the United States; and

Whereas individuals and organizations that are dedicated to preventing and ending domestic violence should be recognized: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month; and

(2) expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should continue to raise awareness of domestic violence in the United States and its devastating effects on families and communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to H. Res. 590 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I want to call attention to the fact that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, as first declared by Congress in 1998, and I also

would like to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for bringing this forward through the Education Committee.

Throughout October, thousands of groups hold events to bring awareness to the violence that affects millions of men, women and children in our country every single year. The positive effect of this advocacy has increased community awareness about domestic violence.

Increased knowledge about domestic violence and the services available helps victims seek help, holds abusers accountable, and helps children live in homes where violence is not condoned. In addition to recognizing October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, our Congress has recognized that domestic violence is a serious crime by passing laws such as the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, the Victims of Crime Act and the Violence Against Women Act.

Preventing domestic violence is critical in addressing and breaking the cycle of violence. And it is a cycle. Whether the violence is found in a dating situation or in married life, the strongest risk factor of violent behavior continuing from one generation to the next is if children are witnessing this violence. Evidence shows that children who witness domestic violence at home are more likely to engage in violent behavior, do poorly in school, use drugs and alcohol, and at an early age engage in risky sexual behavior and develop mental illness issues.

Domestic violence adversely affects the workplace by negatively impacting the victim's health and safety, decreasing employee productivity, and increasing health care costs.

A Bureau of Labor Statistics national survey found that 21 percent of full-time employed adults were the victims of domestic violence.

Congress must continue to lead in making our Nation aware of domestic violence and its impact on our society. We must assist the men, women and children affected by domestic violence while prosecuting this as a crime.

In my district in Nassau County, there were over 5,000 domestic violence hotline calls last year, and 2,700 domestic violence victims received services other than hotline calls. They received counseling, legal and residential and nonresidential services. But, unfortunately, we did not reach all of them. There is still much work to be done.

During October, the Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic Violence will do its part in reaching the community through trainings with the police department, medical staff, students in social work programs, and public safety announcements.

Mr. Speaker, clearly we need to work with the men and women of this Nation to educate them on what domestic violence is, the impact upon society and how to stop it in each community. It affects our children and it affects our community. It affects all of us.